

# Cultural CONNECTION

Volume V, Number 9

Winter 2001

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Volume V, Number 9  
Winter 2001



COUNTY OF ORANGE  
HEALTH CARE AGENCY

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REFUGEE CONFERENCE: A DAY OF SOLIDARITY

The first Southern California Refugee Conference, "A Forum for Addressing, Respecting and Understanding the Mental Health Needs of Refugees" took place at a time when the majority of the country held its collective breath. September 12, 2001 was a day of sadness and despair, yet if the attendees at the conference in Newport Beach are an accurate indicator, it was also a day of coming together—of solidarity.

Three hundred fifty attendees from all over the State gathered together to provide a venue from which all involved could become better acquainted with the special mental health needs of our diverse refugee populations.

The morning began with a stunning video presentation that set the tone for the day, both of struggle and of triumph. The keynote speaker, Kieu Chinh, star of the "Joy Luck Club" and named "Refugee of the Year" by Congress in 1990, shared her own personal battles with being a refugee and facing depression and suicide. Dr. J. David Kinzie made his presentation live via video conferencing (due to airport closures) and introduced the audience to "Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in Southeast Asians." Rounding out the morning was Dr. Michael Smith speaking on "Herbal Remedies in Refugees."

After a calming lunch in the rose garden, overlooking the Pacific Ocean, attendees chose between a number of breakout



sessions including: Refugee Alienation and Distress Syndrome"—Roberto Velasquez, Ph.D., "Forensic Factors Impacting the Psychological Assessment and Treatment of Traumatized Civil War Refugees"—Cynthia Morales, Ph.D., "Resettlement Agency Service Providers—A Panel Presentation," "Infectious Disease Control in the Refugee Community"—Lauri Thrupp, MD.

Following a brief break, attendees went on to workshop session II, which included: "Current Strategies in Providing Mental Health Services to the Asian Pacific Islander Refugee Population"—Glenn Masuda, Ph.D., "Mental Health Intervention for African Refugees and Immigrants"—Eke Wokocha, Ph.D., "Opportunities for Change: Approaches to Trauma"—Rifka Hirsch, "Mental Health Issues in Vietnamese Refugees"—Clayton Chau, MD, Vuong Nguyen, MD, and "Torture and Trauma—Refugee Experience"—Ana Deutsch, MFT.

(Continued on page 2)

## UNITED...NOT DIVIDED

In times of crises, we as Americans tend to gather strength from each other. When faced with uncertain circumstances, we gravitate towards the family, towards what we know to be safe and comforting. The recent happenings in our country have placed a great deal of strain on all.

Fear fuels many reactions, especially hate. With the recent jump in hate crimes in Orange County, targeted at folks who look "Middle-Eastern," it is essential that we address such issues with both our clients and ourselves.

In the year 2000, there were approximately 122 hate crimes reported in Orange County. A hate crime is any criminal act or attempted criminal act that is motivated by the victim's **race, ethnicity, religious orientation, gender or disability**. According to the 2000 Hate Crime Report issued by the Orange County Human Relations Commission, 31 of those 122 crimes were perpetrated against Jews, 21 against African Americans, 17 against Lesbian/Gays, etc., with 4 against Middle Easterners and 2 against Muslims. Unfortunately, these numbers have risen sharply since the events of September

11th. There have been **37** reported hate crimes and hate incidents in Orange County since **September 11** that targeted "Middle-Eastern" or "Middle-Eastern" appearing folks. The numbers are great, yet many more hate crimes and incidents go unreported for a number of reasons such as:

- People are often fearful that the perpetrator will return and harass them further if they make a report.
- People may also believe making a report only serves to stigmatize themselves and/or their family.
- People often have little faith the perpetrators will be caught and successfully prosecuted.
- Immigrant victims can have difficulty communicating the incident due to cultural barriers, including language.
- Immigrants may distrust any government agency as a result of the reputation of similar agencies in their native country.
- Undocumented workers will not usually come forward because

they fear contacting any law enforcement agencies due to their immigration status.

Living in such a diverse place as Orange County, it is essential that we do what we can to reduce hate crimes. The following suggestions can assist a client or you in doing just that:

- Learn to identify hate crimes
- Report hate crimes to your local police
- Report hate-related incidents to the OC Human Relations Commission
- Assist and support hate crime victims
- Work to prevent hate by building understanding and tolerance
- Speak out against acts of hate

For more information on hate crimes, or dispelling hate crimes, please call the OC Human Relations Commission at (714) 567-7470 or the Office of Cultural Competency at (714) 796-0189.

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA REFUGEE CONFERENCE: A DAY OF SOLIDARITY

*(Continued from page 1)*

The day concluded with a reception and entertainment by the Vic Ares Trio in the atrium.

A special thanks goes out to all who attended on this very important day, as well as to all of our exhibitors, including:

Refugio Para Ninos, GlaxoSmithKline, Lilly, Wyeth-Ayerst Laboratories, UCI-H.A.B.L.A., California Department of

Health Services, Orange County HCA, Orange County SSA, Acacia Adult Day Center, Alzheimer's Association, Bristol-Meyers, CalOptima, Catholic Charities, Korean Community Services, Mental Health Association NAMI-OC, Orange County Psychiatric Society, Pfizer, St. Anselm's Cross Cultural Center and The Cambodian Family.



## GROUP WORK WITH VIETNAMESE ADULT CLIENTS IN CALWORKS

SUZIE XUYEN DONG-MATSUDA, MSW  
CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER I, CALWORKS

**"F**irst generation Vietnamese adults do not do well in groups because they have a tendency not to tell others their personal problems." You may have heard this comment in conferences or workshops as recent as today. Let us assess the validity of this statement so that together we can have an accurate understanding and empathy in serving this population.

When I hear a statement such as this, I ask myself what experience the person may have had doing group work with the Vietnamese population? Research and literature have not been well developed regarding group therapy for Vietnamese clients. Unfortunately, such generalized beliefs still commonly exists.

I believe that making a generalized statement about a particular population's behavior, no matter the culture, denies them of their individual differences and needs. What I have learned in working with Vietnamese adult clients in group is that they have universal needs like many others such as the need to process their stories of pain and strength, providing a therapeutic environment is established and confidentiality is addressed. This assessment has been confirmed by other mental health professionals who are doing group work with the Vietnamese adult population.

Due to long-standing and traumatic experiences with violations and abuse through war, separation, migration and others, many Vietnamese adults find different ways to survive and sustain

their needs. These individuals do try to share their stories and experiences with their friends, relatives, and others, even though they often feel misunderstood, invalidated, not empathized with, nor acknowledged afterwards. They at times even feel judged and betrayed. Thus their reluctance to share is not because they did not want to.

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*"In short, working with Vietnamese adult clients in a group modality can be powerfully effective."*

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For the Vietnamese adult client, effective group work not only enables them to open up, but also powerfully engages them in a "collective healing" process. In a women's group, a female client, for the first time, was able to sob and share with other female clients her experience of being repeatedly raped by her ex-husband. In a male group, male clients were able to learn to share stories of infidelity and domestic abuse as well as to experience remorse. Issues as profound as loss, physical, emotional, and sexual abuse were also shared. Group members are able to comfort, help, and heal one another with their grief through active mutual support and sharing of resources. From my experience, this process of sharing is achieved in the middle or late-middle phase of group work.

Moreover, what I have learned is that a therapist's communication skills and his/her ability to use the Vietnamese language in a healing manner are

extremely critical. For some Vietnamese clients, their emotional wounds are still fresh. Being bilingual and bicultural serves as a bridge for the clients to effectively adjust to both sets of cultural values and to adequately understand both socio-political systems in which the clients have been conditioned. Thus, being a bilingual and bicultural professional assures us of providing effective services to these clients.

Lastly, as we assess our clients from the context of their particular environmental configuration, it is important that services be responsive to their individual needs. It is also important that the delivery of services be provided with culturally sensitive skills and innovations to meet the strengths and needs of the clients. In short, working with Vietnamese adult clients in a group modality can be powerfully effective. It is up to us to provide service accessibility, development and service adaptation with professional competence.

I welcome your input regarding this issue as we can learn from one another. I can be reached by e-mail at [Sdong\\_Matsuda@hca.co.orange.ca.us](mailto:Sdong_Matsuda@hca.co.orange.ca.us).



## Cultural Events Calendar

December 9, 2001

**Menorah Lighting Ceremony**

Location: Fashion Island

Information: (949) 786-5000

December 30, 2001

**Little Tokyo Community Mochitsuki & Shimewana Workshop  
(Learn to make mochi or rice cake)**

Location: Japanese American Cultural and Community Center

244 South San Pedro St., L.A. 90012

Admission: Free

Information: Kym Aoki at  
(213) 628-2725 ext. 112

December 29, 2001

**Kwanzaa Celebration**

Location: Bowers Museum

Information: Willia Edmonds at  
(714) 543-7379

Continuing Through December 30, 2001

**Glory of Christmas**

Location: Crystal Cathedral

Information: (714) 544-5679

December 31, 2001

**First Night Fullerton—An alcohol-free, family-oriented evening of  
music, art, culture, exhibits, entertainment and dining, climaxing  
with a fireworks show at midnight.**

Location: Downtown Fullerton

Information: (714) 738-6575

Continuing Through December 31, 2001

**Inventing Paradise: Hawaiian Image and Popular Culture on display**

Location: Fullerton Museum Center

Information: (714) 738-6575

Continuing through January 9, 2002

**The Holy Land: David Roberts Dead Sea Scrolls and House of  
David Inscriptions**

Location: Bowers Museum of Cultural Art

Information: (714) 567-3600

Continuing through January 13, 2002

**The World of the Etruscans**

Location: Bowers Museum of Cultural Art

Information: (714) 567-3600

January (No specific Date), 2002

**Chinese New Year Celebration: Chinese Dance Troops & Kung Fu**

Location: Los Angeles

Fax: (323) 662-9786

January 6, 2002

**Kotohajime: First performances of the New year**

Location: Japanese American Cultural and Community Center

Fee: Free

Information: (213) 628-2725

January (No Specific Date), 2002

**Vietnamese New Year Celebration: Vietnamese Music, Performance, and cultural food celebration**

Location: Golden West College

January 6-February 24, 2002

**4<sup>th</sup> Annual Shikishi Exhibition**

Location: Japanese American Cultural and Community Center

Fee: \$3.00

Information: (213) 628-2725

January 19 and January 20

**West Coast Premiere Warabi-Za**

**Exciting program of folk music and dance**

Location: Japan America Theatre

Fee: \$25, \$23 for Students, Seniors, Groups, \$18

Information: (213) 628-2725

February 3, 2002

**Black History Parade and Cultural Faire**

Location: Santa Ana, 20 Civic Center Plaza

Information: (714) 440-8943

February 3 - 29, 2002

**Black History Month Celebrations**

Location: Elite Beauty Supplies & Santa Ana Main Post Office

Information: (714) 972-2190

(Ernesta Wright &

James Jefferson respectively)

Best Practices with Diverse Populations:

# YESTERDAY TODAY & TOMORROW

presented by  
County of Orange Health Care Agency / Pacific Clinics

**SAVE THE  
DATE**

Registration . . . . . \$50 - by February 13, 2002  
Onsite Registration . \$65  
(if after deadline)

*March 6, 2002*  
*Irvine Marriott*

## 3rd Annual Multicultural Conference

*Look for Registration  
Material in December!*

*Keynote  
Speaker* **Dr. Robert Guthrie**  
author of "Even the Rat was White"

*Featured  
Speaker* **J. David Kinzie, M.D.**

For information, call 714.796.0188  
Hosted Continental Breakfast & Lunch  
CEU's will be available  
[www.oc.ca.gov/hca/behavioral/cultural.html](http://www.oc.ca.gov/hca/behavioral/cultural.html)



# Spotlight on Excellence

## OCTOBER HONOREE — KERRY WILSON



**K**erry Wilson began his career with the County of Orange in 1989. He initially worked with Beaches, Harbors and Parks, serving some 10 years in that division, before undertaking his current position with the Health Care Agency. Kerry currently serves as the Web Coordinator for the Health Care Agency, in Quality Management.

Per his colleagues, Kerry is a "Quiet Leader" who "embraces diversity in all that he does." Kerry always goes the extra mile in ensuring that projects that he is involved in demonstrate cultural variation. This can clearly be seen in his work on the HCA WebPages, as well as a recent project completed for Cultural Competency, a video presentation on refugees.

The California State Association of Counties (CSAC) recently honored Kerry for his collaborative work on the Animal Care Services website. The site was named the winner of the Annual Challenge Award competition, acknowledging it as one of the 12 most creative county programs in the state.

Kerry brings honor and prestige to Quality Management and the Health Care Agency as a whole.

## NOVEMBER HONOREE — SANDRA SALAZAR



**S**andra Salazar began her journey towards her goal of being a nurse when she graduated in 1969 from Mount Sinai Nursing School, where she was a Guggenheim Fellow and a Bloomberg Scholar. She furthered her education by completing her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and Anthropology at Colgate University in 1974.

Sandra came to the Health Care Agency in 1992. She began her career here in Behavioral Health Services as a Monitor for Long Term Care, and then became a Manager for Managed Care. Following a brief stint in Central Quality Improvement as the Service Chief, she moved on to Special Programs, before settling in as Service Chief II at the ETS (Evaluation and Treatment Services).

Per her colleagues, Sandra demonstrates "a great interest and commitment to issues of diversity". In fact, she also had a hand in the development of portions of the Cultural Competency Plan currently in use by the Cultural Competency Program.

## DECEMBER HONOREE — EVA SOLORIO

**E**va Solorio has been a volunteer and community activist for the past twenty years. She currently heads up the Agency's Islands Project, having recently been promoted to a Program Supervisor. Eva began her career with the County in Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services as a Mental Health Specialist at the Westminster Clinic some three years ago.

Eva, a Certified Alcoholism Counselor, demonstrates a deep commitment to cultural competence. Per her colleagues, "It is so evident when you see Eva in action that she works from the heart, especially with people of color." Eva, a bilingual/bicultural counselor has presented on numerous panels, etc., on issues of diversity and substance abuse.



### Spotlight on Excellence



Do you work with someone who exemplifies Cultural Competency? Someone who is both sensitive and respectful to persons of all cultures, whether colleague or consumer? If so, the Cultural Competency Program would like to formally acknowledge these individuals.

Please fill out the necessary information and pony it back to us and we'll make sure this employee or consumer gets acknowledged in our next newsletter. Our pony address is 38-P.

Awardees will be honored at the County's Mental Health Advisory Board Meeting. Thank you.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Work address/ Pony address: \_\_\_\_\_

Discipline: \_\_\_\_\_

Why you believe he/she is Culturally Competent:

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Example of dedication to Cultural Competency:

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Volume V, Number 9

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The Cultural Connection is published quarterly by the Cultural Competency Program of the County of Orange/Health Care Agency. If you would like to contribute an article, or have comments, ideas, or suggestions for newsletter improvement, please write to us at:

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